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# Hannah and her Seven Sons





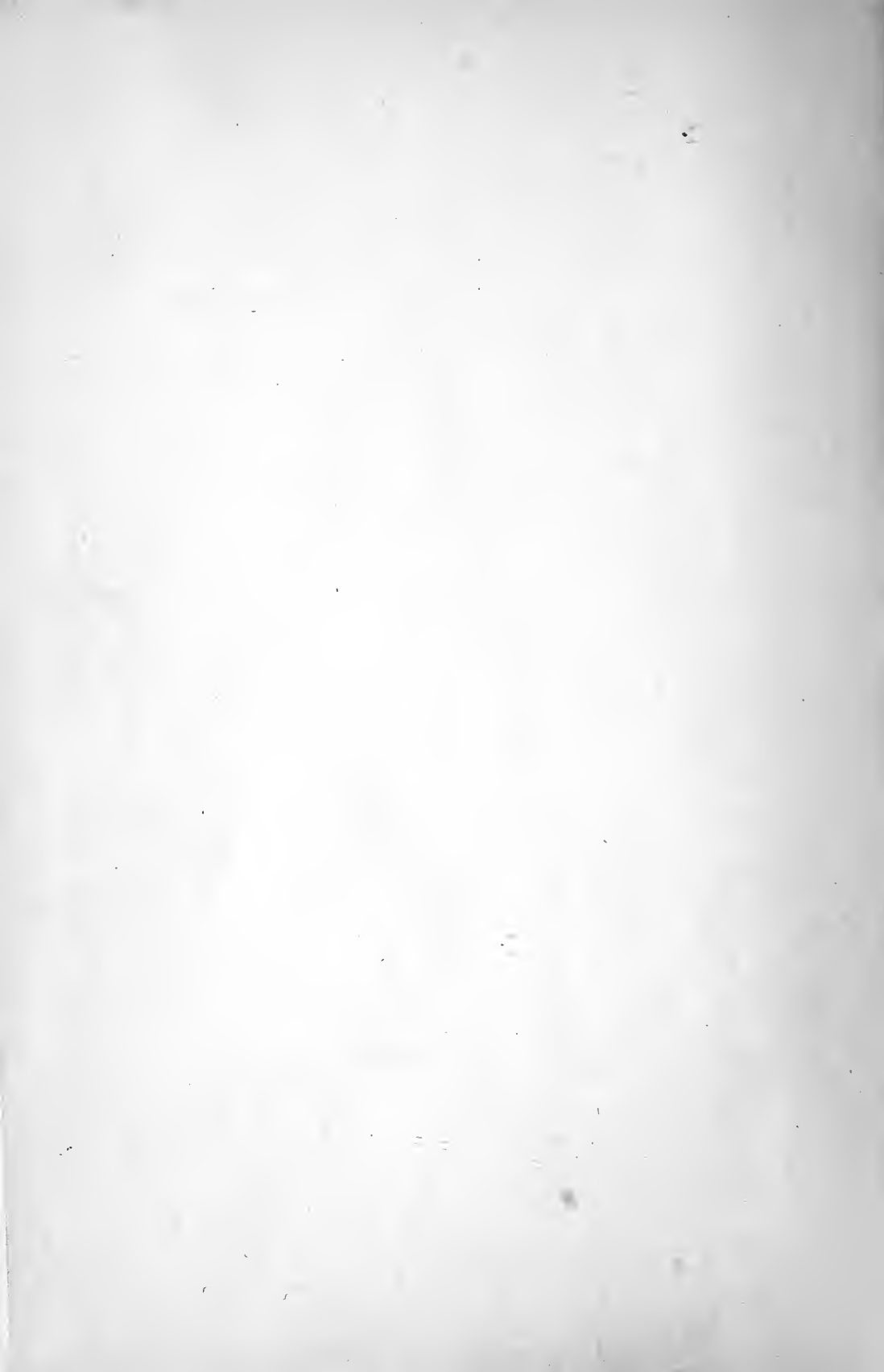
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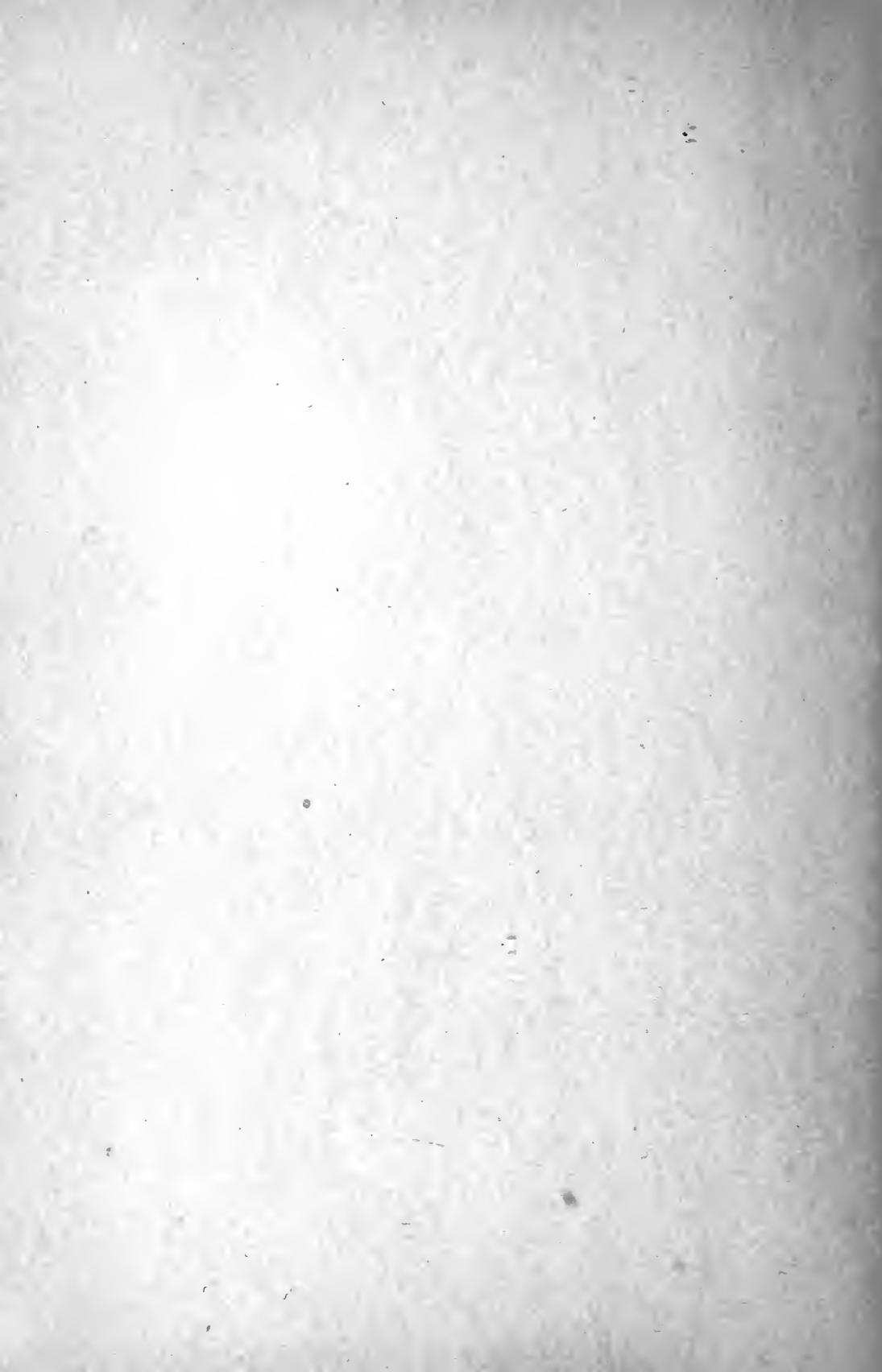
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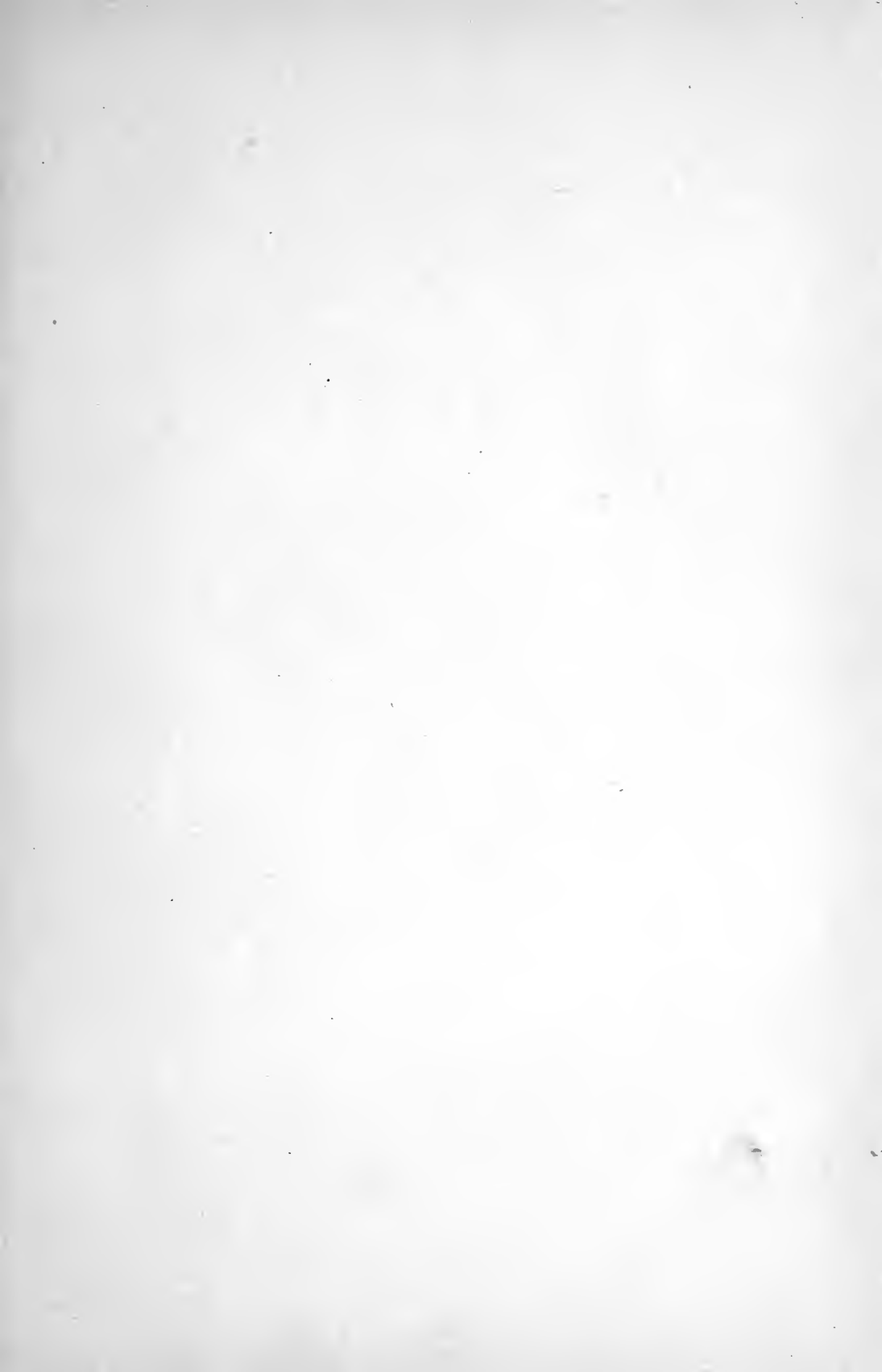
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HANNAH AND HER  
SEVEN SONS







Tyranny.



# HANNAH AND HER SEVEN SONS

AN INCIDENT OF THE PERSECUTION OF  
THE JEWS BY THE SYRIAN MONARCH  
ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, 167 B.C.

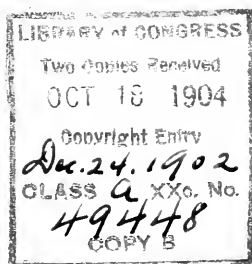
BY  
MINNIE DESSAU LOUIS



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## Hannah and her Seven Songs

All is desolate and dark. To me there's  
no light

Since they took from the world my  
treasures so bright.

My children! My children! Beats  
yet my heart

When all of its strings are thus riven  
apart?

Yet for Israel's God this suff'ring I  
bear,

And would bear a greater, if greater  
there were.



All is desolate and dark. To me there's no light  
Since they took from the world my treasures so bright.

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

Oh ! how the whole scene is burned into  
my brain !

I see the vile Syrians with faces like  
Cain

Rush over my threshold and ruthlessly  
seize

All my seven fair sons, while I on my  
knees

With tears and implorings beseech them  
to wait ;

—Hope whispers that time might avert  
their sad fate ;

I knew 'twas but yester the old scribe  
they slew,

The old Eleazar to Israel so true,—

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

On my knees I implore them to wait but  
a day ;

They mock at my pleading ; then drag  
us away

And cast us in prison ; but leave us not  
long ;

The Bigot his triumph will show to the  
throng.

With wickedest pleasure he calls for the  
first

Of my beautiful boys, the one that I  
nursed

In the flush of my youth when Judea  
was free ;



On my knees I implore them to wait but a day.

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

—Oh God! keep his heart firmly true  
unto Thee.—

Ha! The king commands homage to  
him and his gods.

He looks up to Heaven, nor falter his  
words:

“God forbid that homage to thee I  
should show;

Israel's God is my God! To none else  
will I bow.”

They lead him to death, my first born!  
my pride!

And now tear my second fair boy from  
my side



## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

And place him in front of the conqueror's throne:

—Thou wilt not, my son, thy religion disown.—

His answer is ready; he quick makes reply:

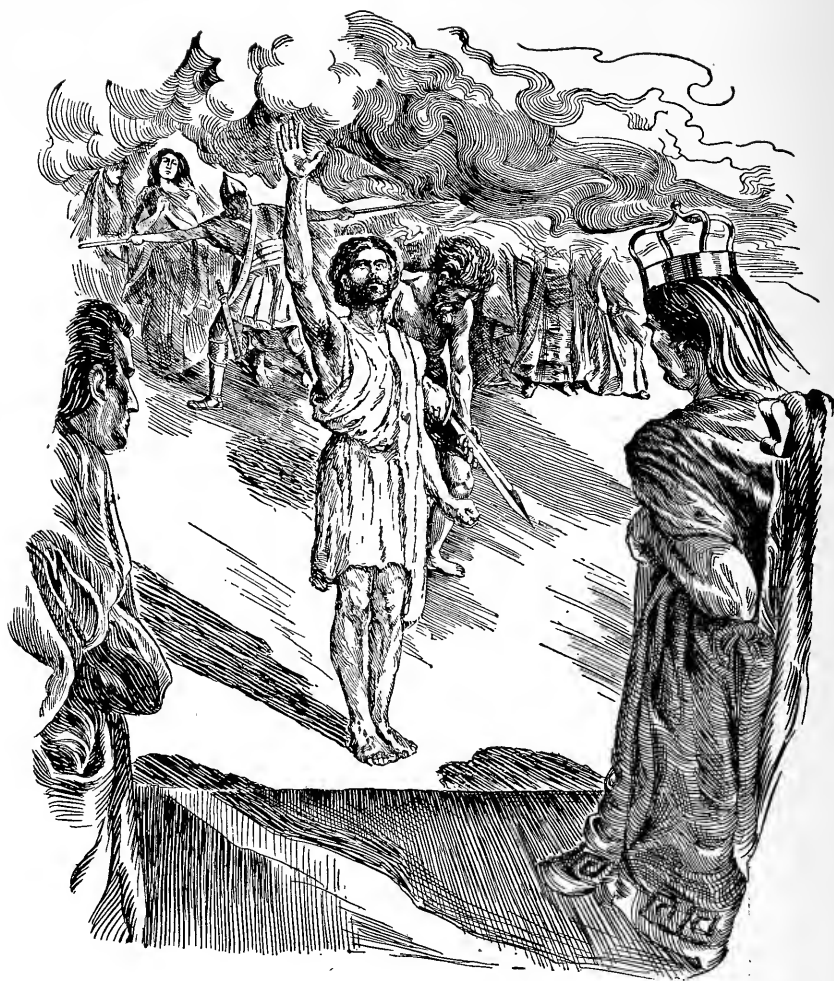
“My brother bowed not, and no more will I!”

“Why not?” asks the tyrant. “Because,” says my boy,

And his face grows resplendent with heavenly joy,

“Our second commandment tells all,—even thee,

No other gods shalt thou have before me.”



“God forbid that homage to thee I should show ;  
Israel’s God is my God ! To none else will I bow.”

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

Death follows his brave words. My  
third boy they take;

—Be still, my wild heart—not yet must  
thou break.—

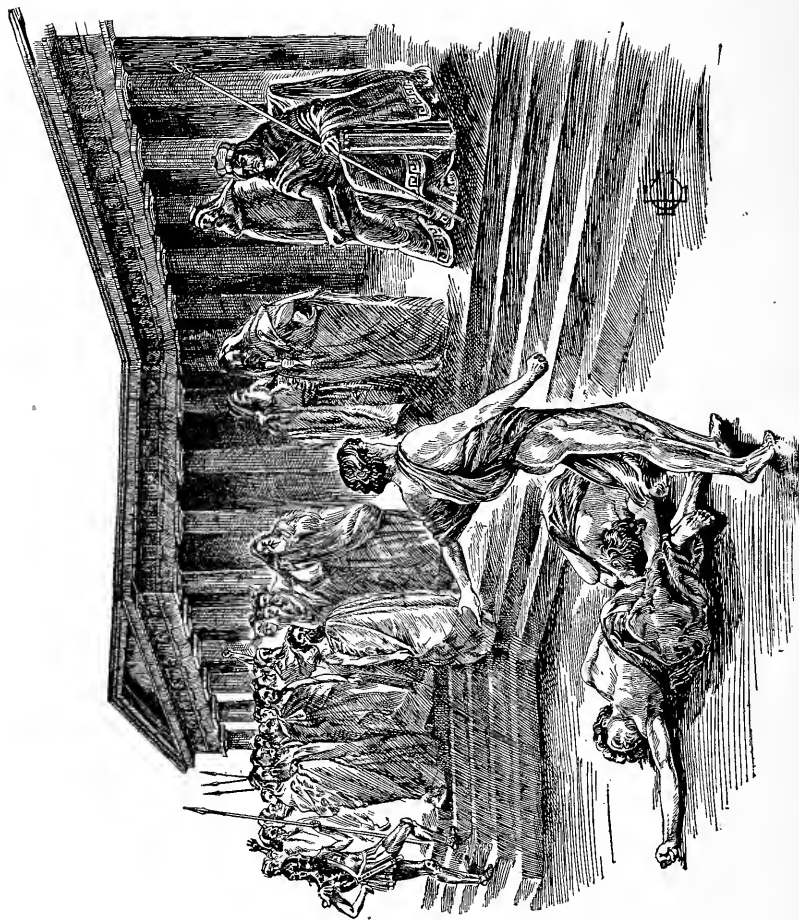
My third one! My hero! How princely  
his port!

“No other God shalt thou worship! is  
taught

In my pure religion; more gladly I  
meet

The fate of my brothers than bow at  
thy feet.”

These proud words the death-blow as  
guerdon receive.



——“More gladly I meet  
The fate of my brothers than bow at thy feet.”

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

My fourth boy they take; will the  
tyrant achieve

Any conquest over his soft, gentle  
heart?

—Fear not, my sweet son! Bear brave-  
ly thy part!—

Yes! he too is faithful! He utters  
these words:

“He that sacrificeth to all other gods  
Save the Lord only, shall be wholly  
destroyed.”

Alas! he too is slain! how widens the  
void

In my sore-stricken heart. Ha! now  
my fifth lad

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

They drag to the tyrant, who, already  
mad,

Becomes doubly enraged at these words  
of my son :

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God,  
He is One!”

With this watch-word of faith he yields  
his young life.

Now they come for my sixth. His  
spirit is rife

With scorn and contempt for the des-  
pot's vain power ;

Nor scourges nor threats will cause him  
to cower.

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

“Why so obstinate?” asks the tyrant,  
more mild.

—Waver not, my dear son, thou’rt  
Judea’s true child!—

“Think’st thou I’m affrighted? My  
God is still here;

He is mighty and terrible! Him only  
I fear;

And thou too wilt one day acknowl-  
edge His might,

And suffer that thus thou hast usurped  
His right.”

They take him to death in his fresh, joy-  
ous youth,



—now my fifth lad  
They drag to the tyrant.



## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

That thus he pronounces the stern words  
of truth.

What horror is this? My youngest ye'll  
take?

My baby? My darling? Oh! for the  
sake

Of the mother who bore you, spare me  
this son!

My six have ye murdered! Will ye  
leave me not one?

They heed not my pleading, but drag  
him away;

Oh, Father of Heaven! Is this but one  
day?



—Oh ! for the sake  
Of the mother who bore you, spare me this son !

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

But see! The base murd'rer speaks  
kindly to him.

—My sweet precious child, do nothing  
to dim

The lustre that shines from thy six  
brothers gone;

Be true to thy God e'en though thou'rt  
undone.—

Now the king hands him treasure, and  
tells him to live,

And promises all, if allegiance he'll give.

See! Now does he cast his ring on the  
ground,

Now shows him his dead brothers lying  
around



“Think’st thou that I fear thy threats?” says my boy.

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

And tells him their fate will be his if he  
dare

Refuse to stoop for it.—Still lies the  
ring there!

“Think’st thou that I fear thy threats?”  
says my boy;

“Our God is the great King of Kings!  
Then why

Should I give allegiance to other than  
He?”

“If thy God is so great why saves He  
not thee

From my power?” asks the king.

“Because,” he replies,

*Hannah and her Seven Sons*

And in his young face a grandeur doth  
rise,

“I am not worthy redemption from  
thee

And thou art not worthy God’s greatness  
to see.”

“Slay the lad like his brothers!” the  
tyrant commands.

Oh! Cruel king, ere thou steepest thy  
hands

In the blood of my little one, let me be  
slain.

I cannot endure this mountain of pain.

“Nay, thy own laws forbid,” the tyrant  
doth say ;

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

“Sheep nor cow with its young shalt  
thou kill in one day.”

Oh! woe to thee, murd’rer, our laws to  
pervert!

The God of our race will inflict thy  
desert.

Come, my sweet angel! My lamb!  
Ere we part,

Come kiss thy poor mother! Come  
nearer my heart!

—Oh courage!—My dear one, tell  
Abraham there,

My sacrifice hath his much exceeded;  
where



'Tis for God's glory ; His will be done !



## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

He built one altar I have built seven !

He offered one Isaac ; all mine have I  
given !

A little longer ! A little longer ! Fare-  
well, my son !

'Tis for God's glory ; His will be done !

There ! There are my children, my  
dear treasures, all !

They see me. And now they beckon  
and call



Yes ! Yes ! My Beloved ! I'm coming ! I come !

## *Hannah and her Seven Sons*

To come join them there in that beautiful place.

Yes! Yes! My Beloved! quick,  
quick will I trace

My steps to our house-top, and thou  
canst reach there

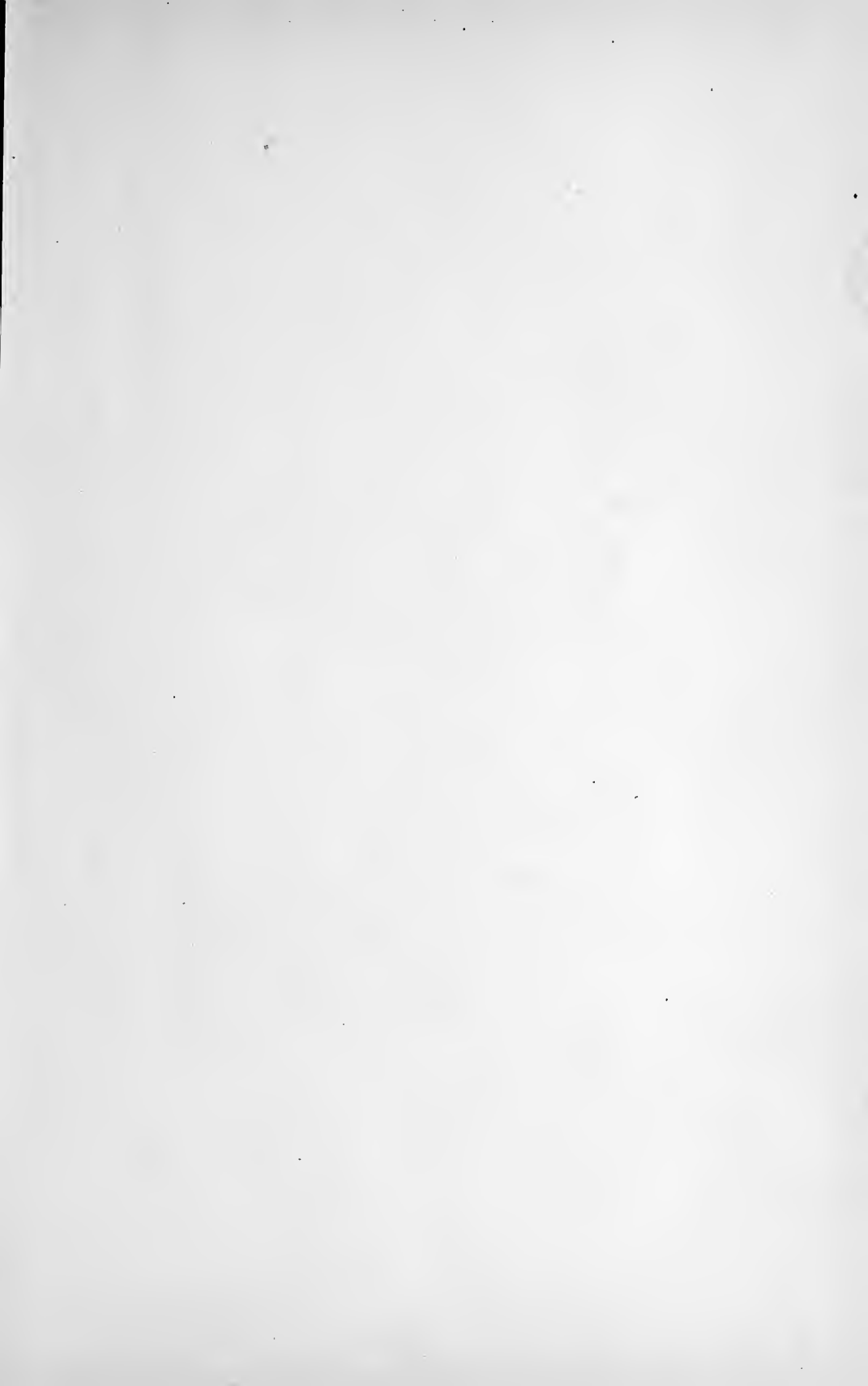
And with thy strong arms draw me up  
through the air.

We'll cheat the mad tyrant, and dwell  
in our home.

Yes! Yes! My Beloved! I'm  
coming! I come!







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